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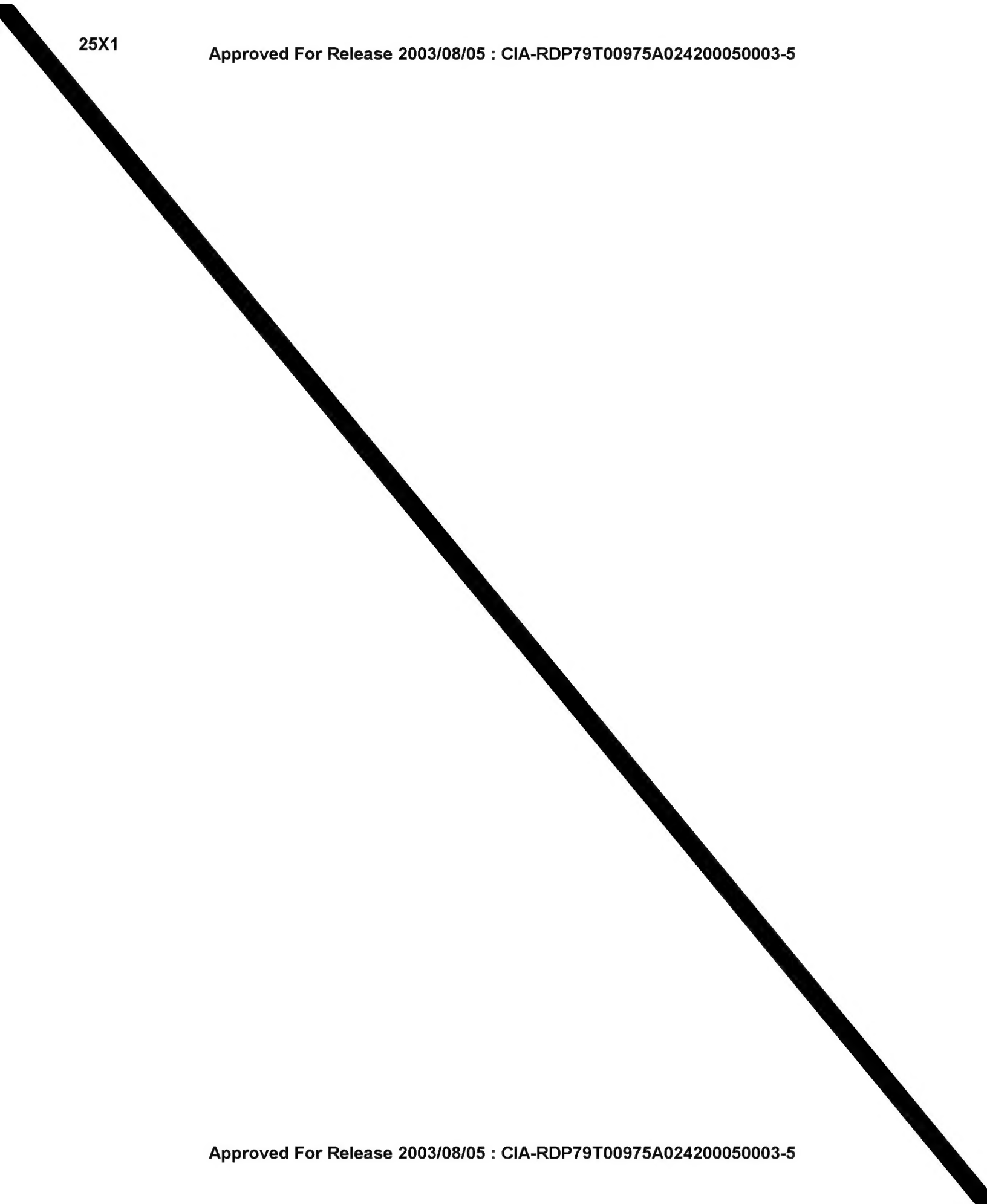

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USSR: The Soviets have apparently suspended the education tax across the board since 19 March, but they remain highly selective in granting exit permission. Jewish activists in the USSR report that the education levy has not been collected from emigrants bound for Israel during the past three weeks. The tax has also been waived in four instances involving emigration to the US. The timing of those waivers coincided roughly with the initial large-scale exemptions granted emigrants to Israel.

The over-all rate of emigration remains largely unaffected by the tax suspension, although the number of better-educated emigrants has probably risen somewhat. Most of those who recently received exit permission had been cleared for emigration to Israel earlier but were unable to pay the education levy.

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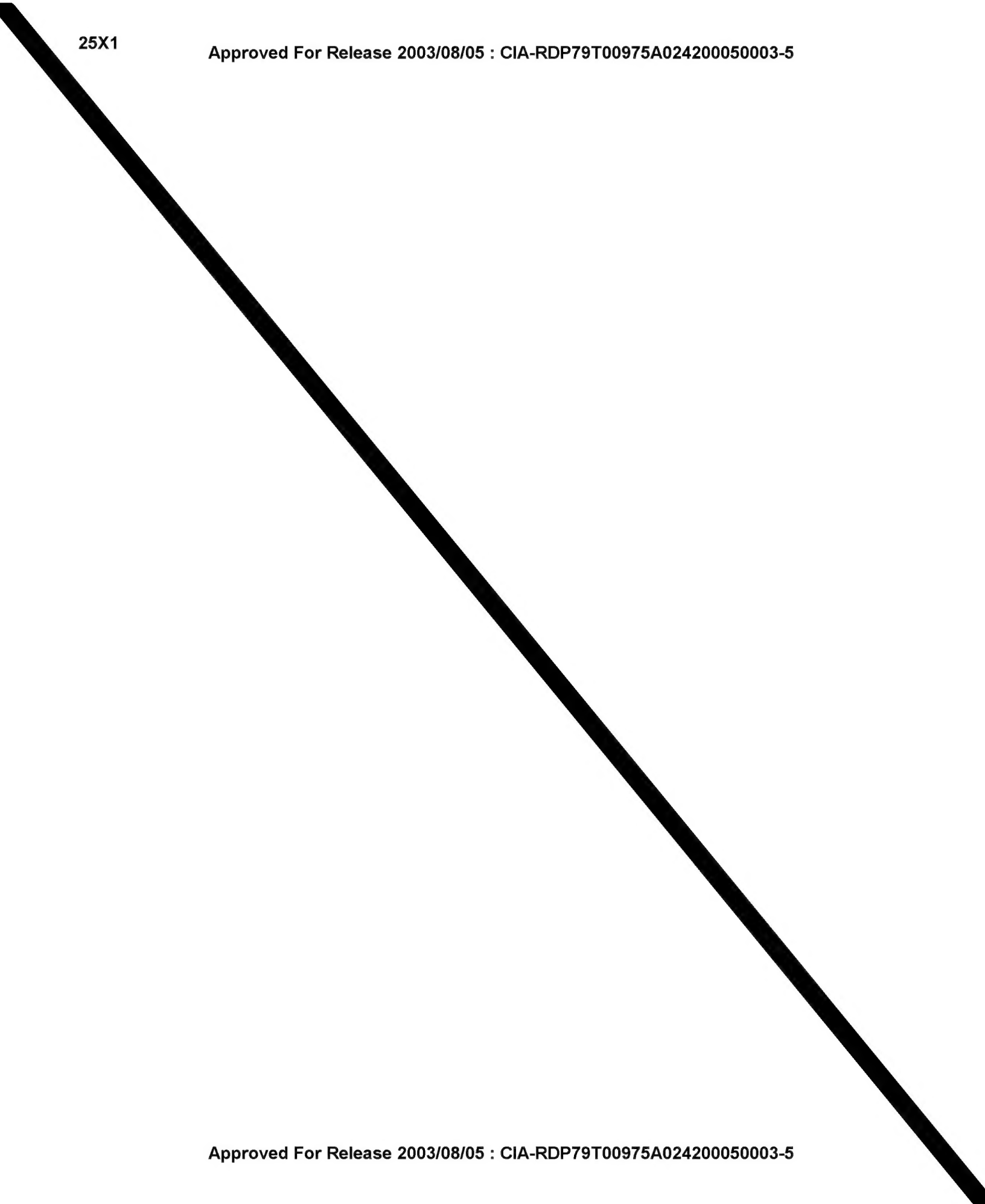

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NOTE

LAOS: Although the two sides remain far apart on many issues, Communist and government negotiators this week apparently reached agreement on the makeup of a new coalition cabinet. Chief government negotiator Pheng Phongsavan said that Vientiane will retain the ministries of Interior, Defense, and Finance, while the Communists will take the portfolios for Public Works, Foreign Affairs, and Information. Posts of lesser importance will be divided evenly between the two sides. Despite the progress on political issues, the Communists are maintaining a hard line on military matters, and this could block the formation of a new government for some time.

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